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ABSTRACT

Glasser's Control Theory deals with self-motivation by explaining all behavior as the drive for satisfaction of five internal needs: to survive and reproduce, to belong and love, to gain power, to be free, and to have fun. The theory posits that individuals always choose to do what is most satisfying at any given time. This paper discusses the application of specific teaching strategies to the middle-school level, particularly Glasser's Control Theory, and applies control theory to three broad areas identified as critical to development of the early adolescent in middle-level school environments: (1) characteristics of the middle-school student which impact on his/her learning; (2) characteristics of successful middle-school teachers; and (3) the training of middle-school teachers. The paper's major discussion revolves around how to put theory into practice and looks at some of the implications in doing so. The importance of cooperative learning as a tool for self-motivation is discussed and its connection to Control Theory is examined. The paper suggests that cooperative learning helps students to work toward common goals, help one another learn, gain self-esteem, assume more responsibility for their own learning, and respect their classmates while retaining positive interdependence. Some of the reasons for a new approach to middle-school teaching and learning are developed and the need to effectively motivate middle-school students is discussed. Finally, the paper offers recommendations for effectively preparing middle-school teachers. Contains nine references. (AA)

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ED 400 931

CONTROL THEORY: APPLICATIONS TO MIDDLE-LEVEL SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: To discuss the application of Glasser's Control Theory to middle-level school environments.

Significance: Glasser's theory will be applied to three broad areas identified as critical to the development of the early-adolescent in middle-level school environments. These areas are (1) characteristics of the middle-school student which impact on h/er learning, (2) characteristics of successful middle-school teachers, and (3) training middle-school teachers. The forefront of research affecting policies and practices in the forementioned areas has been included. In addition, the presenter will discuss impressions he has gathered from the international forum on this topic.

Review of Literature: Five areas have been reviewed and considered state-of-the-art research topics by ranking authorities in middle-school education. The specific areas to be discussed include characteristics of the middle-school student, instructional methodology, pre- and in-service training, middle-school concept, and organizational models. Additional areas influencing the early-adolescent's development will include analyzing the effects of various management styles, the effects of various organizational and disciplinary procedures on student behavior identifying motivational techniques for this age group, analyzing instructional procedures designed to deal with individual differences, grouping, assessing, counseling, instruments for evaluating student development (cognitive, affective and social) and computer-augmented instruction.

Discussion: The special interest of this paper will apply Glasser's Control Theory to the areas cited in the "significance" of the paper. The specific areas reviewed in the literature will be discussed with the theory in focus. The audience will be asked questions which impact on the implementation of this theory into practice.

Summary and Conclusions: A procedure for implementing this theory based on the related research and recommend topics for further research will be presented.

Introduction: I'm Bill Martin. I'm employed at The University of West Florida in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and direct of the NCATE Self-Study. In addition, I'm formulating a textbook for middle-school teachers on strategies for teaching and learning.

Background: This presentation comes from two studies which dealt with the perceptions of middle-school personnel regarding the instructional needs of middle-school teachers. The results of both studies revealed two major concerns of middle school personnel; namely, classroom management and strategies for teaching and learning. It was from these studies that this paper evolved. These studies were reported at AERA in 1986 and 1987.

Purpose: This talk is to explain how to put theory into practice and to look at some of the implications in doing so. The theoretical base that I have chosen is Glasser's "Control Theory" which is an outgrowth of the notion of cooperative learning. The environment in which I have selected to apply this theory is the middle-level grades (grades 5 through 9).

Questions:

What is "Cooperative Learning"?

What is "Control Theory"?

Which needs are perceived to be most important to middle-level teachers?

What are the social realities of the pre- and early-adolescent?

Discussion:

The four elements of "cooperative learning":

1. Positive interdependence of goals, tasks, resources, roles and rewards.

2. Require face-to-face interaction.

3. Individual accountability for mastering the material.

4. Students learn to use appropriate interpersonal and group skills.

What is the difference between cooperative learning groups and traditional learning groups?

Cooperative Learning Groups	Traditional Learning Groups
Positive interdependence	No interdependence
Individual accountability	No individual accountability
Heterogeneous	Homogeneous
Shared leadership	One appointed leader
Shared responsibility for each other	Responsibility only for self
Task and maintenance emphasized	Only task emphasized
Social skills directly taught	Social skills assumed
Teacher observes and intervenes	Teacher ignores group skills
Groups process their effectiveness	No group processing

From Johnson, D. W. and others. (1984). Circles of learning.

Discussion: Glasser's "Control Theory" deals with self-motivation

Research on cooperative learning experiences tend to lead to:

1. Promoting interaction
2. Psychological safety
3. More accurate perspective of group interactions
4. Realistic view of one's self in the group
5. Psychological success
6. Enhancenment of self-acceptance and self-esteem
7. Increase in liking others
8. Expectation of rewards and continued collaboration with other classmates

In summary, cooperative learning helps students to work toward common goals, help one another learn, gain self-esteem, assume more responsibility for their own learning, and respect their classmates while retaining positive interdependence.

What constitutes Glasser's "Control Theory"?

This theory grows out of the tenants of cooperative learning in that Glasser is concentrating on the individual's need to not only internalize the elements of cooperative learning but focus on self-motivation as the key to learning. Glasser bases his theory on the explanation that all of our behavior is an attempt to satisfy at least five powerful forces called our basic needs.

Reasons for a new approach to middle-school teaching and learning:

Schools are not functioning.

The "work-them-harder, longer with more liberal arts" won't do it.

First success for dropouts comes after the unhappy school experience.

More teachers, counselors, administrators is an expensive proliferation of personnel.

Tracking hasn't worked.

Only half the students are involved and the other half are dropping out.

Glasser is recommending a major change in teaching strategies. Cooperative learning or learning teams need to consider more than just putting students together on a task. Middle-school students need more control of their own behaviors. The old theory of stimulus/response has led us to where we are now, which deals with people (outside stimulus) telling students what to do. Students will do what they believe is most satisfying to them, a fact we have failed to recognize in the middle-school classroom. There has to be a pay-off for them if they are to work harder. Young people want to be "somebody" and the vehicle isn't there for most of them to achieve this.

Motivating the middle-school student:

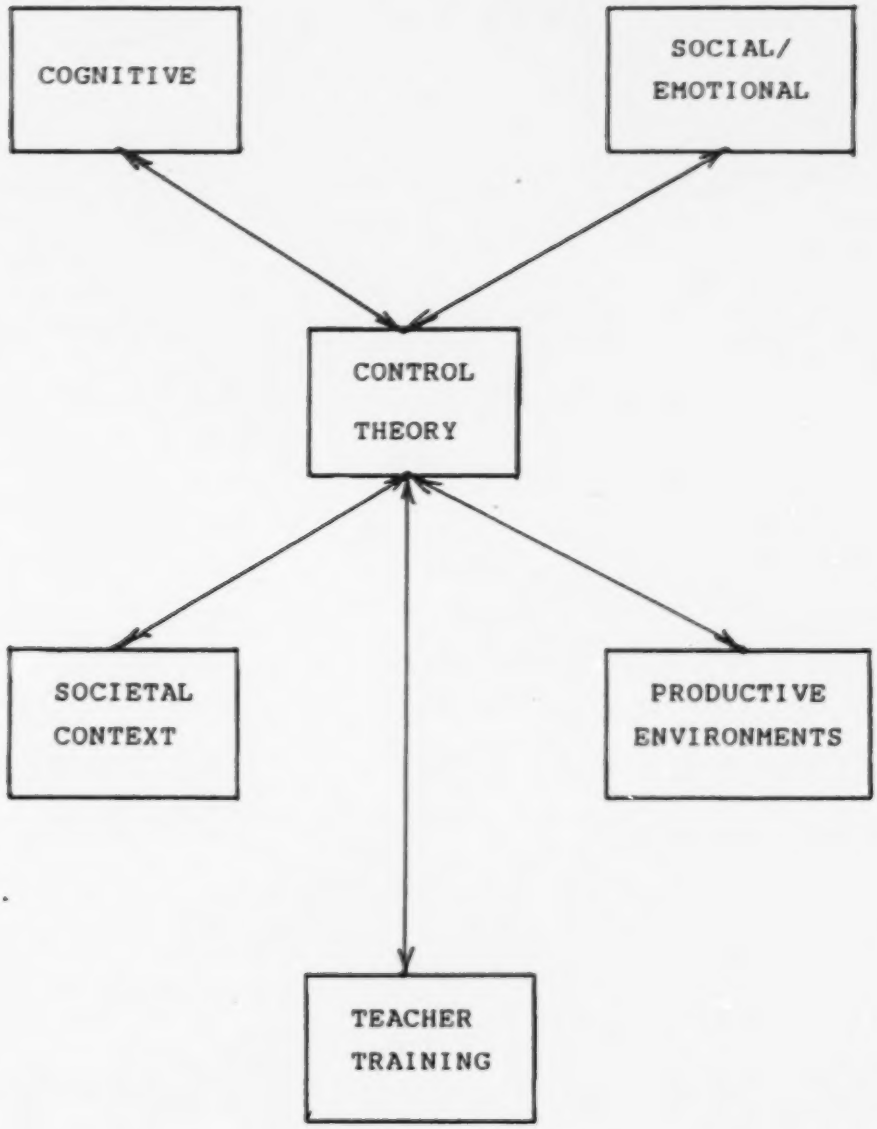
All our behavior is a constant attempt to satisfy one or more of five basic needs that are programmed into our genetic structure. None of what we do comes from telling us. Control theory explains that we always choose to do what is most satisfying to us at the time. We can't make the students do what is not perceived by them as satisfying. Control theory teaches that all middle-school students can do and need to do what fulfills their needs. The needs Glasser refers to are (1) to survive and reproduce, (2) to belong and love, (3) to gain power, (4) to be free, and (5) to have fun.

Glasser feels that the middle-school students must develop learning pictures in their minds; for example, the middle-school student must create a mental picture that reading is a need-satisfying activity. Middle-school students who are successful in learning have a learning picture of a pleasant experience. Success then begets success.

The implications for successfully using control theory as a teaching and learning strategy for the pre- and early-adolescent are in the following diagram:

IMPLICATIONS FOR APPLYING THE CONTROL THEORY

AS A MIDDLE-SCHOOL TEACHING STRATEGY



Based on the two previous studies, the implications can be outlined starting with:

1. Broader learning base
2. Broader experiential base
3. Broader societal base
4. Physical change
5. Cognitive change
6. Social change

If the former can be accepted, we need to consider preparing middle-school teachers based on the following:

1. A movement away from rote learning to conceptual learning.
2. The extension of basic skills into higher-order skills.
3. The extension of mathematical computation into mathematical reasoning and problem solving.
4. A shift from traditional social studies to global and multicultural education.
5. A de-emphasis in norm-referenced evaluation in favor of criterion-referenced evaluation.
6. A movement away from the understanding of information to the use of information.
7. A movement away from the competitive base to a more dominant cooperation base.
8. A reduction in specific training toward more generalized skills.
9. The development of multiple job skills rather than a single job speciality.
10. A movement away from a sense of personal isolation toward a sense of belonging.

Summary and Conclusions:

This presentation has selected a teaching strategy which grew out of the two AERA presentations, discussions of Glasser's "Control Theory," and certain implications for middle school scholars. I have concluded that this is an unique stage of development with identifiable factors impacting on the pre- and early-adolescent's development. And finally, the middle-level environment has pedagogical needs that warrant special consideration in the development of teacher-education programs.

Recommendations for Further Study:

This presentation looked at specific teaching strategies for the middle-level classroom; namely, control theory. Additional studies could focus on articulating the characteristics of the pre- and early-adolescent, instructional strategies which would

satisfy the academic and pedagogical needs of this age group, the middle school concept, and organizational models. Additional areas influencing this age group's development could include analyzing the effects of various management styles, the effects of various organizational and disciplinary procedures on student behavior, identifying motivational techniques similar to Glasser's and Johnson's, analyzing instructional procedures designed to deal with individual differences, grouping, assessing, counseling, instruments for evaluating student development (cognitive, affective and social) and computer-agumented instruction.

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